

The America Next Door

When it comes to longevity, we are anything but equal.

NORTHLAND LOW-INCOME RURAL WHITE (AMERICA 2)

3.6 million whites living in impoverished, rural counties³ in the northern plains and the Dakotas

- ◆ Income per capita: \$17,758
- ◆ Life expectancy: 76.2 years for males, 81.8 years for females
- ◆ Significant mortality advantage over the rest of white America, despite the hardships that come with low incomes
- ◆ Reported the highest health plan coverage in the eight Americas

WESTERN NATIVE AMERICA (AMERICA 5)

Approximately one million Native Americans in the mountain and plains areas of the West, living predominately on reservations⁴

- ◆ Income per capita: \$10,029
- ◆ Life expectancy: 69.4 years for males, 76 years for females
- ◆ Very high mortality rates from diabetes and alcohol-related injuries, such as traffic accidents and cirrhosis of the liver
- ◆ Reported the lowest health care coverage
- ◆ Native American males living in South Dakota have an average life expectancy of 58.

BLACK MIDDLE AMERICA (AMERICA 6)

All remaining black populations not included in Americas 7 and 8

- ◆ Income per capita: \$15,412
- ◆ Life expectancy: 69.6 years for males and 75.9 years for females
- ◆ In Americas 6, 7, and 8, the groups with a distinct mortality disadvantage, the rates of routine checkups in the past 12 months are slightly higher.

MIDDLE AMERICA (AMERICA 3)

214 million whites (98% of this group is white), Asians, and Native Americans not grouped into Americas 1, 2, 4, and 5

- ◆ Income per capita: \$24,640
- ◆ Life expectancy: 75.3 years for males, 80.3 years for females
- ◆ The lifespan of men increased from 72 years to 75 years over the course of the study's 20-year period.

SOUTHERN LOW-INCOME RURAL BLACK (AMERICA 7)

5.8 million blacks living in low-income, rural counties in the Mississippi Valley and the Deep South⁵

- ◆ Income per capita: \$10,463
- ◆ Life expectancy: 67.7 years for males and 74.6 years for females
- ◆ The 12.8 year gap between females in America 1 and America 7 is analogous to the gap between Japan (which in 2001 had the highest female life expectancy) and Lebanon or Nicaragua.

HIGH-RISK URBAN BLACK (AMERICA 8)

About 7.5 million people living in urban settings of more than 150,000 blacks with a cumulative probability of death by homicide between ages 15–74 greater than 1 percent

- ◆ Income per capita: \$14,800
- ◆ Life expectancy: 66.7 years for males, 74.9 years for females
- ◆ Mortality risks of young and middle-aged adults in high-risk urban areas are comparable to those in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.
- ◆ 15-year-old black boys and girls counted as part of America 8 were, respectively, 4.7 and 3.8 times more likely than those in America 1 to die before age 45.

LOW-INCOME WHITE IN APPALACHIA AND THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY (AMERICA 4)

16.6 million whites living in impoverished rural counties⁶

- ◆ Income per capita: \$16,390
- ◆ Life expectancy: 72.1 years for males, 78.1 years for females
- ◆ Despite an income level similar to America 2, these low-income whites have a life expectancy equal to Mexico's and Panama's.
- ◆ Thirty percent have not completed high school.

ASIAN (AMERICA 1)

10.4 million Asians living in counties where Pacific Islanders make up less than 40% of the total Asian population

- ◆ Income per capita: \$21,566.
- ◆ Life expectancy: 82.1 years for males, 87.4 years for females⁷
- ◆ Asian-American women living in Suffolk County, NY lead the nation in longevity: average life expectancy is 95.6 years.
- ◆ Many scientists thought Asian longevity would plateau as immigrant families adopted Western diets; Murray and Ezzati's study demonstrates that second-generation Asian Americans continue to experience this mortality advantage.

1. Based on data from 1999

2. This method lessened the sample size limitations present when examining by county alone.

3. Defined as having a population density of less than 100 persons/km² and 1990 county-level per capita income below \$11,775

4. Does not include the west coast

5. Defined as having a population density below 100 persons/km², 1990 county-level per capita income below \$7,500, and total population size above 1,000 persons

6. Ibid

7. Average life expectancy based on data from 2001 for each America